



# City of Santa Clara

## Green Business Newsletter

FALL 2016

### WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A GREEN BUSINESS?

A Green Business operates efficiently and strengthens its bottom line through its operations.

A Green Business Certification gives businesses a marketing edge to environmentally conscientious customers. The path to achieving a Green Business Certification can also be an excellent team building exercise that boosts company morale.

To learn more about the Green Business certification process, visit [www.greenbusinessca.org](http://www.greenbusinessca.org).

## Santa Clara Green Power Program

Silicon Valley Power's (SVP) *Santa Clara Green Power* program, which allows customers to purchase up to 100 percent of their power from renewable carbon-free resources, has been named as one of the Top 10 performing green power programs in the nation by National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), the U.S. Department of Energy's primary national laboratory for renewable energy and energy efficiency research and development.

About 8% of our customers participate

in *Santa Clara Green Power*, ranking sixth for customer participation in the nation. Selling a total of 179,621 megawatt-hours of electricity in 2015, *Santa Clara Green Power* is ranked 10<sup>th</sup> in the nation in Top Green Power Sales, a category that includes electric utilities many times larger than SVP.

Customers interested in participating in the *Santa Clara Green Power* program can contact SVP for more information or a price quote by emailing

[customerservice@siliconvalleypower.com](mailto:customerservice@siliconvalleypower.com).

Environmental Programs  
Public Works Department  
City of Santa Clara  
1700 Walsh Avenue  
Santa Clara, CA 95050



## Green Business Spotlight: Neighborhood Christian Center



*"Going green helped us save money, save the environment, and empower the next generation to do the same. Going green is not a one-time thing, it is a daily choice."*

Neighborhood Christian Center (NCC) is a preschool and kindergarten children's center where children learn to be good stewards of our environment through their daily activities, both indoors and outdoors.

NCC has been a certified Green Business since 2012. City staff took a tour of the facilities to learn more about their efforts, and interviewed Ms. Graciela Marques-Hahn, the Director of the Center.

**City Staff:** What inspired NCC to pursue Green Business Certification?

**Ms. Graciela:** We wanted to run NCC in the most efficient manner while being good stewards of our planet. We made sustainable choices that reduced our carbon footprints.

**City Staff:** Did you find the certification process to be educational?

**Ms. Graciela:** Beyond educational! We were so energized and wanted to take ownership of all of it. We went around campus to identify how we were using things, and then we analyzed if we are doing it in a sustainable manner. It had to be replicable and not generate waste. Also, we make sure our staff is on board. We do not teach anything we don't practice ourselves.

**City Staff:** Were there any challenges?

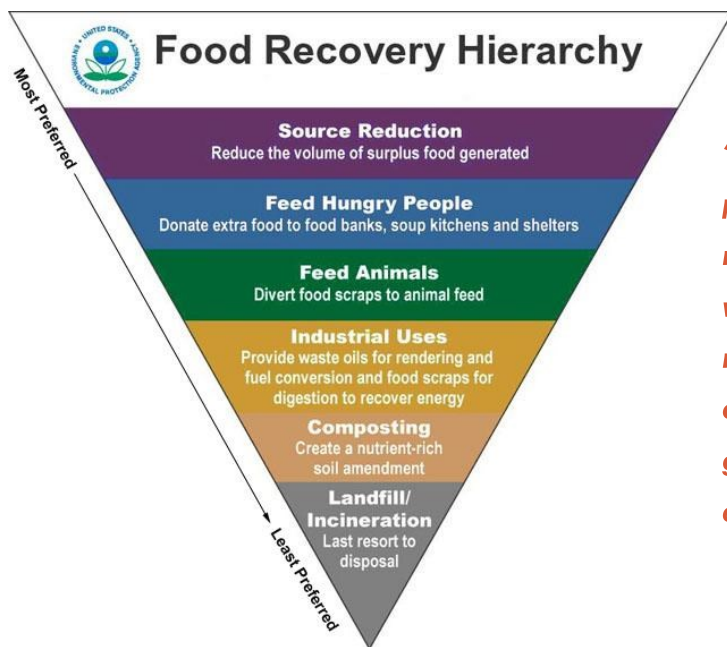
**Ms. Graciela:** We could not afford to build permanent buildings, only modular. It was challenging to make sure they met our standards for low-toxicity, fixtures, etc. The most challenging part was the lighting, because the tube lights needed to be a specific type (T8), so we approached

Silicon Valley Power and asked for help. The City and County had a grant, and they were able to replace all of the lighting for us. In addition, we were the first school to buy 100% Green Energy: Wind and Solar from Santa Clara

**City Staff:** What advice would you give to businesses considering certification?

**Ms. Graciela:** Going green helped us save money, save the environment, and empower the next generation to do the same. Going green is not a one-time thing, it is a daily choice. We want to make our knowledge available to schools in Santa Clara and beyond. We are open to anybody visiting our school, and we will even come to you to answer your questions!

# Reducing our Food Waste



***"One in four people are at risk of hunger, while 34 million pounds of edible food go to landfill each year."***

Despite being one of the wealthiest areas in the United States, many people in Santa Clara County struggle to get enough food. One in four people are at risk of hunger, while 34 million pounds of edible food goes to landfill each year.

In 2013, Santa Clara County was short 125 million meals to meet the needs of low-income families. As state legislation encourages local jurisdictions to stop sending organic materials into the landfills, we see a clear opportunity to offer surplus food to people in need. But, why isn't this happening already?

There is a misconception among potential donors that there are liability issues involved with donating food. However, the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act of 1996 relieves donors from liability when donating food in good faith to a non-profit, except for cases of intentional misconduct or "gross negligence." In addition, the Tax Reform Act of 1976 provides tax incentives for charitable donations

of "wholesome food" to non-profits. The deduction amount is based on the difference between the wholesale and retail value of the food donated.

The following are examples of local organizations that can help you keep food out of landfills by redirecting it to people who need it most:

- **Peninsula Food Runners:** uses a volunteer network to collect surplus food from grocery stores, restaurants, caterers and other food service businesses, and deliver about 30,000 meals per week to families in need.
- **Second Harvest Food Bank:** offers a Grocery Rescue Program to pick up unsellable edible items from grocery stores.

If your organization is interested in learning how food rescue programs can help you comply with AB1826, please contact the Environmental Programs staff at [environment@santacalaraca.gov](mailto:environment@santacalaraca.gov).

## Upcoming Events



**Great Race for Clean Air**  
More information and registration available at [www.sparetheair.org](http://www.sparetheair.org)

**VERGE**  
where tech meets sustainability

**VERGE**  
Santa Clara Convention Center, Santa Clara, CA  
September 19–22, 2016

**CoolCalifornia.org**  
Simple steps for a sustainable future

**Small Business Award Program**  
Applications due on November 1, 2016



**California Coastal Cleanup Day**  
[www.cleanacreek.org](http://www.cleanacreek.org)  
September 17, 2016



**Silicon Valley Innovation & Entrepreneurship Forum**  
Santa Clara Convention Center, Santa Clara, CA  
Sept 30–Oct 1, 2016

**GREENBUILD**  
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE AND EXPO

**GreenBuild International Conference and Expo**  
Los Angeles Convention Center, Los Angeles, CA  
October 5–7, 2016

## Green Business Tips : Close the Lid on Litter



The following tips help prevent litter from getting into streets, storm drains, and creeks.

- Keep trash and recycling dumpster lids closed and the surrounding area clean.
- Don't overfill dumpsters. Increase service if there is overflow.
- Regularly check the perimeter of your property for litter. Place any litter in the dumpster.
- Clean up all spills and leaks immediately using a spill kit with dry absorbent.

## Donate Your Surplus Materials to Benefit Local Teachers

Resource Area for Teaching (RAFT) is a non-profit organization that provides local teachers with tools to implement hands-on learning experiences. RAFT transforms surplus materials into educational kits for students to learn math, science, and art concepts.

What can you donate to RAFT?

- Old inventory
- Returned products/overstock
- Manufacturing over-runs
- Production end pieces, punch-outs and rejects
- Outdated promotional items

- Office supplies, new or used
- Arts & crafts materials
- Tubes, containers, lids & caps
- Fabric, foam and textiles
- Plexiglass, rubber and vinyl
- Wire and magnets
- CDs, CD cases and CD spindles
- Current computer equipment and peripherals
- Medical and lab supplies

RAFT is always looking for new items to create learning activities. To see if you can donate your surplus materials and supplies, please call (408) 451-1420.

Submit questions to be answered in the Green Business Tips section to [Environment@SantaClaraCA.gov](mailto:Environment@SantaClaraCA.gov).

### GO PAPERLESS!

To access or subscribe to this newsletter electronically, visit [www.santaclaraca.gov/GreenBiz](http://www.santaclaraca.gov/GreenBiz).

### CONTACT US

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